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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/ACE (HODGKINSON), INL (CARROLL) AND DOJ/ICITAP
(TREVILIAN, THOMAS, DUCOT) AND DOJ/OPDAT (ALEXANDRE, EHRENSTAMM,
ACKER)

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SUBJECT: BULGARIA: SUPPORT BUILDS FOR ANTI-OC TRAINING CENTER

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¶1. (SBU) Since reftel C, we have continued to solicit support from EU member-states for the establishment of South Eastern European Regional Organized Crime Training Center (SEEROCTC). The UK Embassy committed concrete resources to the center, and the German and Spanish Embassies are looking for funding from their home offices. All reiterated their support for SEEROCTC as a well-conceived tool in fighting transnational organized crime. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador raised the question of funding for SEEROCTC with his counterparts from the Embassies of UK, Netherlands, Spain, and Germany. The UK Embassy is ready to contribute technical assistance to the center through TDY assignment of instructors and experts, with the British government paying all attendant costs, including transportation, M&IE, and lodging. Funding could be available as early as next year, to be reviewed on an annual basis.

¶3. (SBU) The German Embassy expects to receive approval on co-funding the SEEROCTC in another month, although it is not yet clear what the funds would cover. The Spanish government is actively reviewing the project and will send experts to Bulgaria for consultations. While the French thought the SEEROCTC idea well-conceived, they did not commit to seeking funding from their government. The Dutch shared our view that SEEROCTC should not duplicate what international or other Bulgarian entities are doing on OC training.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: The representatives of the five missions reiterated their positive view of the center as a regional anti-OC tool. Concrete support from the British and the Germans could encourage other countries to make similar commitments. This, coupled with the GOB's efforts to tap into EU funds, brings the idea of a self-sustaining institution dedicated to fighting organized crime closer to reality. END COMMENT

BEYRLE